



Comments for Ag Vision
California Department of Food and Agriculture
July 17, 2008

Dear Secretary Kawamura and Board Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the development of a long term vision of California agriculture.

In recent years, the growth in global energy demand has been outpaced only by continually rising energy prices and increasing alarm about emissions. As oil prices repeatedly establish new record highs, it is clear that long term planning of any kind requires an explicit consideration of energy. Globally, nationally, and at the state level, renewable energy from sources such as wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal has been recognized as a reliable, economical, and clean way of securing a successful energy future. Wind power, in particular, has emerged at the forefront for utility-scale electrical power generation.

Wind power and agriculture have enjoyed a successful partnership since the late 19th century when windmills were employed for water pumping across the country. Today, modern wind turbines can supply electricity to farms and ranches for pumping, irrigation, drying, heating, cooling, and more.

The state of California is a global pioneer in wind power and remains a renewable energy leader with strong programs and policies. California has established renewable energy goals with an ambitious Renewables Portfolio Standard. The benefits of renewables are further recognized in AB 32. Directly supporting distributed wind power installations, the state has two incentive programs to offset upfront costs and a net metering program so that local renewable power installations and grid supplied power can work in concert.

To maximize wind power's benefits to California's agricultural community, we encourage the California Department of Food and Agriculture to consider the following:

- Establish a statewide renewable energy goal for farms.

- Facilitate education and outreach about renewable energy so that the farm community is aware of current technology; its environmental and economic benefits; federal and state incentives; and financing options.
- Establish or support the development of a wind resource assessment program. Good wind measurements are essential to assessing the economic viability of a wind power system. While California already has wind maps and meteorological data from CIMIS and other weather stations, good quality data collected on-site would significantly improve economic evaluations of prospective installations.
- Actively support developing legislation involving renewable energy, ensuring that California agriculture's needs and issues are explicitly addressed. A few specific items that should be advocated are feed-in tariff laws, community renewable projects, and permitting guidelines for small wind systems.
- Encourage renewable power manufacturers and vendors to develop options specifically for the agricultural community. These can include technological options such as hybrid renewable power systems (i.e. wind and solar systems), pumped-hydro systems, wind-dedicated desalination facilities, and others. Financial alternatives such as leasing options and power purchase agreements should also be endorsed.

We are very encouraged by the renewable energy activities that the California Department of Food and Agriculture is engaged in already. We hope that the Department will expand upon them further in developing its long term vision and we would be happy to collaborate with you in doing so.

Best regards,

C.P. "Case" van Dam, Henry Shiu, Scott Johnson
California Wind Energy Collaborative
Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering
University of California, Davis